

Abstract 634

TITLE: HIV/AIDS Prevention; A Reservation Community Effort

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HIV/AIDS Prevention and Early Intervention are critical to survival among Native American populations throughout the Pacific Northwest requiring diverse approaches, which involve all age groups. At one Washington State Indian reservation, the Tribal Council requires that each of its employees receive two hours of HIV/AIDS training from certified trainers. To maximize outcomes, seasonal employees who are predominantly youth must meet this requirement. The reservation-based population consists of approximately 4,000 tribal members. The training is facilitated by a team of health educators who use a community and culturally specific approach in conjunction with the standard Red Cross curriculum. The intended audience for this presentation are providers and support staff who work in Indian communities.

The reservation setting is rural including small communities scattered over one million plus acres of primarily agricultural and forested lands. The tribal members are generally gregarious and enjoy many Pow wows and sports activities drawing members of other tribal communities who seek social and sexual activities. Normally the tribal members have great mobility and as a direct result their regular business and social interactions with members of local and remote urban and reservation communities may place them at increased risk for HIV/AIDS. Two cities having very large Native American/Alaska Native populations are located within 3.5 hours driving distance.

Tribal Health and Indian Health Services have collaborated to maximize the Tribe's required training. Two tribal personnel and one IHS employee have been responsible for delivering the training to varying groups of tribal employees. Pre and post testing have shown great improvement in personal knowledge of risks among all age groups. Statistics published by the Portland Area Indian Health Service and Washington State reflect a very small number of individuals, who self-identify as Native Americans, as having HIV/AIDS within counties where the reservation is located. Interventions for adults are limited to tribal facilities. A youth camp and tribal school are used for youth who are enrolled in summer training-youth employment programs. HIV/AIDS training is reinforced through condom distribution, special initiatives, publications, referrals for anonymous testing and availability of a professional counseling team comprised of MS and Tribal providers.

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